

JOB CORPS

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

Region IV

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Collbran Competes for 2nd Year at FIRST Robotics Competition

In 2003, Collbran Job Corps Center (CJCC) was the first Job Corps center in the nation to participate in the annual FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics competition, held in Seattle. CJCC was the recipient of awards at the Regional level (held in Seattle), including the Judge's Award, which represented outstanding sportsmanship and other noteworthy attributes. CJCC was also the only Job Corps center to participate in the 2004 competition.

The FIRST Robotics Competition is an exciting, multinational competition that teams professionals and young people to solve an engineering design problem in an intense and competitive way. The goal of the program is to team professionals

with young people to solve an intense engineering design problem using inspiration, science, mathematics, technology, ingenuity, and teamwork.

Over 800 teams participated in the

Teams watched a live feed from NASA in early January which demonstrated the "sporting event" the robots must compete in. Approximately 10-14 days later,

teams received a standard "kit of parts" and a common set of rules. The teams then have a six-week time-frame to build robots and enter them in a series of competitions.

In 2004, CJCC students worked approximately 1200 hours building the robot, designing a

website, t-shirts, buttons, a manual, and other required items. In the words of Mark Golden, a CJCC student, "We made that baby breathe!"

This year, the sporting event for

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These pictures represent a couple of the sports events where the students put their robot through its competitive paces.



competition, including teams from Great Britain, Canada, and Brazil. Teams that qualified at the regional level moved on to participate in the Championship (international) Event. In 2003, CJCC participated in the Championship Event in Houston.

Guthrie Job Corps Granted 15th Reaccreditation

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Guthrie Job Corps was granted continuing accreditations Tuesday, October 28, for the 15th year from the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement.

The commission accredits over 9,000 schools across 19 state regions.

"To earn accreditation, schools must meet NCA CASI's quality standards, be evaluated by a team of professionals from outside the school,

and implement a continuous school improvement plan focused on increasing student performance," said Mark Silvers, Business and Community Liaison.

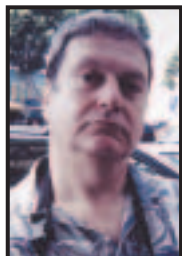
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Employment and
Training Administration

JOB CORPS News

FOOD FOR THOUGHT By Dean Christopher



In a recent forum I suggested that Job Corps should think of at-risk youth as not just economically, socially and educationally disadvantaged, but also *nutritionally* disadvantaged. All disadvantages are interconnected, but there's a particularly strong link between poverty and malnutrition. (In a nutshell: body-building proteins cost more than stomach-filling carbohydrates.)

Our brains run every aspect of our lives, unconscious and conscious; from abstract problem-solving to basic body functions; from refined artistic expression to grunt processes like fingernail and hair growth. The brain controls breathing and heartbeat until our last seconds. It's the only organ we can't live without: there are kidney dialysis machines, respirators, and artificial hearts. But there are still no artificial brains. HAL is not yet among us.

The brain isn't just computer, motor and steering. It's also our connection to the world beyond our bodies. All five senses (OK, ladies, in your case *six*) work only through the brain. The better they function, the better for the brain's owner.

But brains have no choice but to live in bodies. And a body needs proper nourishment to perform well and keep its resident brain healthy. Although I focus on academic, vocational, and social learning, *everything we do works better when the brain doesn't have to deal with illness or irregularities in the body it lives in*. Even beyond nutrition-related disease (adolescent-onset diabetes, hypertension due

to obesity, etc.) it's hard for students' brains to stay alert and productive when their systems are glutted with carbs, and they're flying high on sugar.

Young Americans get roughly half their calories from sugar, and much of the other half from carbohydrates that – unless they run regular marathons – their bodies store as fat. It's nature's equation, not mine: burn more calories than you consume = weight loss. Consume more calories than you burn = weight gain.

Some 75 percent of America's children – rich and poor alike – live an odd paradox. They admire thin, hard bodied people in good physical condition. But they themselves are chunky, soft bodied people in *bad* physical condition. Their heroes are movie stars, rock singers, toned athletes, sometimes even anorexic fashion models. Our culture tells us “thin is cool, fat ain't so hot.” But despite the pro-skinny propaganda, young Americans keep getting heavier and farther out of shape. The disconnect is due largely to the massive tide of ads that push instant gratification through sugar and salt snacks.

For decades, Americans have been overdosing on sugar and salt. The junk food, fast food, and soft drink cartels collectively spend billions every year to shovel minimum-nourishment, maximum-gack products into kids' bloodstreams. Momentum is on their side. And they won't stop their profiteering any sooner than Big Tobacco will stop polluting lungs for profit. Not without activism.

So, how can Job Corps get active in this critical arena?

The movement has already begun in public

schools. Many districts, fed up (so to speak) with the “unfitness epidemic,” have started kicking sugary soft drinks and snacks off campus, replacing them with fruit juices, water, and other healthier products. The sugar and salt lobbies point out that their vending machines are a source of income for the schools. Perhaps so. But how many of those dollars must the community then spend for increased medical and dental care?

I don't accuse Job Corps of deliberately poisoning students. I know that professional nutritionists design your menus. But I've visited enough Job Corps centers to notice the overweight kids – and the vending machines. So I strongly but lovingly recommend that you do the following:

- Ban all junk foods (especially sugared and highly salted ones) from vending machines; make it hard to eat badly; easier to eat well
- Initiate sampling programs on center to introduce healthy eating alternatives
- Provide up-to-the-minute nutrition information to all instructors
- Create a “survival course for the human body;” show that healthy eating costs no more – and often less – than bad eating
- Make passage of that course mandatory for graduation

I wonder how many kids would be completers if they weren't victims of junk-food-induced hyperactivity or sluggishness; or didn't drop out due to health problems caused or aggravated by bad eating. It's time to ensure that students' brains – not just their bodies – have a safe, healthy environment to live in.

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“Accreditation demonstrates to our students, parents, and community that we are focused on raising student achievement,” said Donna Betchan, academic manager.

Job Corps is also an Oklahoma natural accredited high school. They have had this honor for two years. This means they can issue high school diplomas to those who graduate from their program.

“NCA CASI accreditation...assures parents

that the school is meeting regionally and nationally accepted standards for quality and successful professional practice,” Betchan said.

Silvers said that Job Corps has provided opportunities for over two million economically disadvantaged youth during the past 39 years. “This voluntary education and job training program offers vocational, academic, and social skills training to students aged 16 – 24

at 118 centers nationwide,” he said.

Accreditation requires schools to continue to improve the educational process, and “focuses the academic education staff on analyzing student performance data, identifying areas of weakness, and developing clear goals and plans for improvement,” Betchan said.

“The process keeps everyone in the school focused on raising student achievement,” she said.

JOB CORPS News

North Texas Job Corps “Shadowing” on Fifth Annual Groundhog Job Shadow Day

Monday, February 2, 2004. North Texas Job Corps students joined thousands of employers and students around the country by taking part in Groundhog Job Shadow Day. Since 1998, this initiative to engage students in the world of work has paired student “shadows” with employer “workplace mentors” to introduce students to the workplace and demonstrate the connection between academics and careers.

North Texas Job Corps community partners included: City of McKinney, McKinney Chamber of Commerce, McKinney Housing Department, McKinney Police Department, The U.S. Army, and a host of other private companies which hosted North Texas Students. Student Khan Pope, who job shadowed with the

McKinney Police Department, said, “This was one of the best and exciting learning experiences I’ve had.” He also stated, “This opportunity has inspired me to stay focused on my career goals and successfully complete my training at North Texas Job Corps.”

Job Corps is the nation’s oldest, largest, and most comprehensive residential job training/career development program for at-risk youth ages 16 through 24. Over the last 39 years, Job Corps has provided opportunities to more than 1.9 million economically-disadvantaged young Americans. Administered by the Department of Labor, this voluntary residential training program offers vocational, academic, and social skills training at 118 centers nationwide,

including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Each year, Job Corps serves nearly 70,000 young people. The North Texas Job Corps is operated by the Cube Corporation.



Pictured (from left to right): Officer R. Hack with the McKinney Police Department, Student Khan Pope, and Student Lonnie Lewis

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the robots included “herding” balls dropped from overhead bins (see photo “overhead bin opens” on page 1) for a student to shoot into designated poled areas (5 points for a “basket”), popping 30” balls from a portable goal (see photo “portable goal” on page 1), and hanging the robot from a 10 foot “chin up” bar (50 points). The International competition will

be held in Dallas, April 15 – 17, 2004.

Students relayed that the competition was a great stepping-stone into careers such as mechanical engineers, fabricators, and machinists. They also said it takes tremendous teamwork. They learned each person has to be responsible for their portion of work accomplished because, “If you goof, it goofs up the

next step...like a real job.”

The CJCC team was up against some heavy-duty teams like Boeing and GM, and came away with the sportsmanship award. The school that CJCC mentored, Plateau Valley, won the Judge’s Award also. This award is given to a rookie team and CJCC won it last year in the Seattle Regional Competition.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

In a previous column, you explained the follow-up surveys. Can you explain a little more about what is being collected by the surveyors? Also, can a participant refuse to participate in the survey? –

Seeking More Details

Dear Seeking More Details,

The surveyors collect five types of data/information from the participants:

1. Data to re-verify their initial employment and/or school placement of placed graduates and former enrollees (only in the 90-Day Former Enrollee and the 90- to-120-day Interim Checkpoint for Eligibility surveys).
2. Information about job/employment experiences in the last week.
3. Information about educational experiences in the last week.

4. For those who were neither working nor in school the previous/last week, summary information about work, school, and job search activities are gathered.

5. Information regarding satisfaction with Job Corps’ services.

When a participant is contacted regarding a survey, they are under no obligation to participate and are allowed to refuse to answer portions, specific questions, or the entire survey. As stated in the Job Corps Program Performance Information website, “All former participants selected for the survey have the right to refuse to participate in the survey and the right to be free of coercion or undue influence to participate. Former enrollees and graduates are informed of these rights prior to the start of the questionnaire. Specifically, interviewers are required to read the following informed

consent statement to all potential survey participants:

‘Before we begin the survey, we must be sure that you clearly understand a few points. Your participation in the survey is completely voluntary. Job Corps has obtained approval to conduct the survey from the federal governments Office of Management and Budget. All information you provide will be held in the strictest confidence and only used to assess how young people are doing since they left Job Corps. Your answers will not be shared with anyone outside of Job Corps in any manner that would enable someone to identify you. You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. However, we hope that you will choose to answer as many questions as you can.’”



Albuquerque

Albuquerque Job Corps had a marathon week for Make a Difference Day. AJCC partnered with several organizations such as the City of Albuquerque and the Department of Senior Affairs Home Services Division. Eight students, the Facilities Maintenance Instructor, and the BCL winterized seven air conditioners for seniors. The next day, the Facilities Maintenance students continued on their "Make a Difference" quest and winterized nine more air conditioners for the seniors in need. The same class painted several rooms for a wheelchair-bound senior, age 88. All of the people helped thanked the students, which made this a very rewarding experience. Other groups of students also participated in Make a Difference Day. Student Government and dorm officers split into two groups; one group went to Casa Maria, an Alzheimer's residential facility, where they played games and entertained the residents. The other group went to Saint Vincent de Paul Community Center to assist with sorting of donated clothing. AJCC's BCL and a group of six students participated in a community project with Citi Corps. AJCC Facility Maintenance students cut 30 small birdhouses for a group of Girl Scouts to assemble. Many of the Citi Corps employees, Girl Scouts, and AJCC students participated in landscaping a Wildlife Habitat. This Make a Difference Day project was a success.

Collbran

Members of the Collbran JCC management staff met with Lynn Woellhof, Director of Instruction at Unified Technical Education Campus (UTEC), technical branch of Mesa

State College, in Grand Junction. Discussions held included the center's current matriculation agreement with UTEC, ways to increase the number of students who enroll in classes at the facility, and the possibility of providing classes on center for students who wish to augment their vocational training with college-level courses.

New Orleans

New Orleans Job Corps trainees participated in the National Make a Difference Day. Nearly 20 trainees joined forces with, and volunteered their time and energy to, Habitat for Humanity. These trainees tirelessly worked in assisting with building a house. All of the trainees enjoyed the experience so much that they have expressed an interest in going back and doing it again. The goal of Make a Difference Day was accomplished. It was a win-win situation in which Habitat for Humanity, the family that will reside in the home, and the trainees all benefited from this experience. A big difference was indeed made in the community! In addition to the Habitat of Humanity project, 38 trainees participated in the Hollygrove Neighborhood Clean-Up, and 13 participated in the Second Harvesters Food Bank Project filling boxes with non-perishable food items for the needy. The local residents appreciated the assistance of the trainees.

North Texas

On Saturday, January 30, 2004, family, friends, and community partners turned out to honor North Texas Job Corps 1st quarter graduates. Over 75 young people, who completed vocational, academic, and employa-

bility and social skills training at the North Dallas campus took part in the ceremony. Highlights were the keynote speech delivered by Congressman Ralph M. Hall, along with musical selections performed by Mr. John Taylor. Congressman Hall emphasized the need for our young people to focus their energies in a constructive manner. He also spoke of the positive message and training that Job Corps, and in particular North Texas Job Corps, has made through the years. Congressman Hall pledged his continued support of the Job Corps program and youth throughout the nation.

Shreveport

The Shreveport JCC Health Occupations Trade participated in the first Hispanic Health Fair sponsored by the Northwest Louisiana Health & Education Department – Christus Schumpert Health Systems & Highland Hills Hospital. The event was held at Christ the King School in Bossier City, Louisiana, and more than 150 people participated in the event. Student employees demonstrated their skills by checking blood pressure/vitals, height/weight, and assisting with vision screening. The group also passed out brochures and recruited for the OA department in hopes of obtaining the Hispanic population for enrollment at the center. Alfonso Rodriguez assisted the group with his interpretation skills, which provided those that could not speak fluent English the opportunity to learn about the Job Corps program. The intent of this fair was to provide free health education, assessments, and screenings in a comfortable setting for the Hispanic community.

Ask Arla



Dear Arla,

I'm new to Region IV and would like more information on deadlines for submitting articles, can you shed some light?

S.W. – Texas

Dear S.W.,

Regional newsletters are printed and disbursed bimonthly, so our next issue is due out in May. The deadlines have been differ-

ent in the past, but now I'm trying to get it a bit more constant. All subsequent newsletter deadlines will be the last Wednesday of the month before the issue is scheduled. For example, the May issue deadline is Wednesday, April 28, 2004. Anything received after that date will be put in the following newsletter. This deadline is not only for the newsletter but the directory as well. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me as I look forward to receiving

something from all of you!

All articles, information, Letters to the Editor, Ask Arla letters, and CDSS Directory changes for the Volume 5 Issue 2 newsletter are due by **Wed., April 28, 2004** to:

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